

XXXIII.—*Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.**Allen's Autobiography and Bibliography.*

[Autobiographical notes and a Bibliography of the scientific publications of Joel Asaph Allen. Pp. xii+215; 1 portr. New York (Amer. Mus. N. H.), 8vo.]

As an expression of their appreciation of his services to the American Museum of Natural History the Trustees of that Institution have published this volume containing an account of the life and writings of their veteran Curator of Mammalogy and Ornithology.

Dr. Allen, who is an Honorary Member of our Union and one of the founders of the American Ornithologists' Union, was born in 1838 in Massachusetts and came of good old New England farming stock. His early life was a hard one, and it was not until he came under the influence of Louis Agassiz in 1862 that his taste and craving for natural history were able to get free vent. He went with his teacher on his celebrated expedition to Brazil in 1865, and subsequently undertook exploring work in various parts of the United States. From 1871 to 1885 he was an assistant in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy at Cambridge, Mass., and since 1885 has been a Curator of the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Of late years his activities have been chiefly concerned with mammals, but the list of ornithological titles given in the bibliography numbers 959. Many of these are no doubt reviews and short notices, but still it represents a very large output of ornithological work. We would like to offer Dr. Allen our warmest congratulations on his great achievements and hope that he may long be spared us to continue his valuable contributions to our favourite study.

Bergtold on Incubation.

[A Study of the Incubation Periods of Birds: What determines their lengths? By W. H. Bergtold. Pp. 1-109. Denver, Colorado (Kendrick-Bellamy & Co.), 1917. 8vo.]

In this brochure Dr. Bergtold has collected together the

results of an immense number of observations on the incubation period of birds as well as on the temperature, body-weight and egg-weight of many species, all of which are set out in a series of tables. He has also discussed at length these data and the theories which have been proposed to explain the varying periods of incubation among birds.

The conclusion he has himself reached is that the incubation period depends on the body-temperature of the bird, and that this again is closely related to the "taxonomic lowness or highness of the species." That is, that those birds which are furthest removed or modified from the proto-avian ancestor are those in which the body-temperature is highest and the incubation period the shortest.

He also finds, as has already been pointed out by many writers, that there is some relation between the size of the bird or size of the egg and the period of incubation, larger birds and larger eggs naturally having a longer incubation period. On the other hand, there is little or no relation between the incubation period and precocity, nor does the age of the female or the size of the yolk have any effect on incubation.

According to Dr. Bergtold's table the body-temperature of birds varies from 100° F. to 111° F., the Penguins and Ratite birds being nearer the lower figure, the more highly-developed Passerine birds being at the other end of the scale. In correspondence with this we find that the incubation period of Ratites and Penguins varies from a month to six weeks, while that of the Passerine birds averages twelve to sixteen days. We must always remember, however, as Dr. Bergtold himself admits, that many of the observations on which he relies are far from accurate, more especially those for body-temperature, as this is a matter which has not received much attention. As regards the incubation period, too, errors of observation are probably far from uncommon, as unless each egg in a nest is marked—and in doing so the parent bird is unavoidably disturbed—the exact duration of incubation cannot be discovered.

In this matter Dr. Bergtold draws a great distinction

between the true and apparent lengths of incubation, the former being "the minimum number of days under optimum conditions necessary to hatch a normal bird," while the latter includes as well errors of observation, and those caused by the "other conditions as retard or suspend embryonic development."

We feel that the time has hardly yet come to draw conclusions from such unreliable data, but we must congratulate Dr. Bergtold on his energy and industry in collecting together so much material for the use of future students.

Brooks on Falkland Island Birds.

[Notes on some Falkland Island Birds. By W. Sprague Brooks. Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool. Cambridge, Mass., lxi. 1917, pp. 135-160; 3 plates of photos.]

This paper contains a series of field-notes on a collection of birds made by the J. C. Phillips expedition to the Falkland Islands. It is not very clear from the text whether Mr. Phillips took part in the expedition, nor what was the object of it; in fact, the introductory paragraphs might have been made a little fuller with advantage.

The birds to which attention was chiefly devoted were the Penguins; of these the most abundant are the Gentoo (*Pygoscelis papua*), the Rock-hopper (*Eudyptes nigrivestis*), and the Jackass (*Spheniscus magellanicus*). Full details of the nesting and other habits are given in the case of these three, and the photographs show their appearance on the shore. The vexed question of the Loggerhead or Steamer Duck (*Tachyeres*) is discussed, and Mr. Brooks is quite satisfied that there are both flying and non-flying individuals, but how they can be satisfactorily separated and diagnosed he is unable to state, nor does he find that the distinctions made by Mr. Blaauw in the case of the birds of Tierra del Fuego hold good so far as the Falkland Island birds are concerned, and the whole matter still remains obscure.

Two new species recently described by Mr. Brooks in the 'Proceedings of the New England Zoological Club' (vol. vi.

pp. 25-27) are included in this list, *Anthus phillipsi* and *Phrygilus malvinarum*.

Buturlin on the Nuthatches.

[A short review of Nuthatches (Fam. Sittidæ). By S. A. Buturlin. Trav. Soc. Imp. Nat. Petrograd, xliv. 1916, pp. 145-165. English summary, pp. 166-173.]

This paper, though written in Russian, is fortunately provided with an English summary containing a key to the characters of the subfamilies and genera recognised by Dr. Buturlin, and some notes on several of the forms here recognised as well as descriptions of three new subspecies—*Sitta europæa sakhalinensis* from Saghalien, *S. e. hondoensis* from Hondo, Japan, and *Rupisitta tephronota iranica* from Persia.

Dr. Buturlin would have us recognise ten genera, four of which are new, namely:—*Daphenositta*, *Neositta*, *Neosittella*, *Pæcilositta* nov. (type *S. azurea* Less.), *Cyanositta* nov. (type *Dendrophila corallipes* Sharpe), *Callisitta*, *Arctositta* nov. (type *S. arctica* But.), *Sitta*, *Mesositta* nov. (type *S. himalayensis* J. & S.), *Rupisitta*.

The genus *Sitta* is further reduced by dividing it into four subgenera:—*Homositta* nov. (type *S. castaneiventris* Frankl.), *Micrositta* nov. (type *S. villosa*), *Leptositta* nov. (type *S. leucopsis*), and *Sitta* (sensu stricto) for *S. europæa* and its immediate relatives.

Chapman on Brent Geese.

[Brent Geese. By Abel Chapman. Scottish Nat. 1917, pp. 73-75.]

From Mr. Abel Chapman we have received the note the title of which is quoted, and also a further note on the same subject entitled "Brent Geese: some criticisms by Abel Chapman on Dr. Hartert's reply," which appears to have been separately printed as a leaflet.

Mr. Chapman seems to be very indignant with Dr. Hartert and the authors of the B. O. U. List of British Birds, though we confess we fail to understand exactly what his grievance

is, in regard to the treatment of the case of the Brent Geese in the two recently published Lists of British Birds. It is often difficult to settle whether a plumage-variation indicates dimorphism or a distinct race. This can only be settled by observation at the breeding-grounds. If the two forms breed together we may take it that there is only one race or species-form. If the breeding-grounds are entirely distinct we can conclude that there are two separate subspecies, though closely allied subspecies are often found mingled in the same flocks in winter.

If the dark- and light-breasted Brents breed together on Kolguev, it seems probable that there is only one species which occurs in two dimorphic forms, just as is the case with the Arctic Skua.

Dabbene on Argentine Birds.

[Especies y subespecies aparentemente nuevas de *Geositta* y *Cinclodes* de la República Argentina y del sur de Chile por Roberto Dabbene. Physis, Buenos Aires, iii. 1917, pp. 52-59.]

In this short paper Señor Dabbene describes *Geositta puenensis* sp. n., from the provinces of Jujuy and Salta, *G. rufipennis burmeisteri* subsp. n., from the mountain regions on the boundary of the Argentine and Bolivia, *Cinclodes oustaleti hornensis* and *C. antarcticus maculirostris* subsp. n., from Hermit Island at the southern extremity of America near Cape Horn.

He promises in the near future to provide us with a complete account of the forms of the two genera in question, based on the large collections from the Argentine and elsewhere preserved in the Museum at Buenos Aires.

Dixon on the Baird Sandpiper.

[The Home-life of the Baird Sandpiper. By Joseph Dixon. Condor, xix. 1917, pp. 77-84; map and 5 photos.]

Baird's Sandpiper (*Pisobia* or *Tringa bairdi*) is an interesting little Wader which has been reported four times in the British Isles and has been erroneously, as it seems (see

Hartert, Nov. Zool. xxiii. p. 91, and Ibis, 1916, p. 509), recorded from south-west Africa. Its breeding range is confined to the arctic coast of Yukon and Alaska, and the opposite north-eastern coast of Siberia. It passes through the middle States in autumn and spring, being but seldom observed on the Atlantic or Pacific sea-board, and winters in the Argentine and Chile, where it has been taken as high up as 13,000 feet in the Andes.

Mr. Dixon visited its breeding home in the summers of 1913 and 1914, and in this short paper describes its nesting and other habits during that time. A sketch-map shows the exact position of the recorded breeding places, and there are photographs of the bird on its nest and the eggs *in situ*, as well as of some eggs taken by Mr. W. S. Brooks at Demarcation Point, Alaska, in June 1914 and now preserved in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy at Cambridge, Mass.

Douglas on Irish Woodcock.

[An experimental investigation of the migration of Woodcock breeding in the west of Ireland. By S. R. Douglas, M.R.C.S., etc., etc. P. Z. S. 1917, pp. 159-165.]

In order to find out whether Irish-breeding Woodcocks migrated to any extent, Capt. Douglas undertook a series of ringing experiments on Col. W. W. Ashley's estate in Co. Sligo where breeding Woodcocks are abundant. Between the years 1910 and 1916, 331 young birds were ringed. Of these, 55 (about 16 per cent.) were recovered. All of these with the exception of three were recovered on the estate or within ten miles of it, and only one, reported from north Spain, was taken outside Ireland. Capt. Douglas considers therefore that in Ireland, at any rate, the great bulk of the nestling birds remain in the same locality throughout the following winter months, and that even if later on they do migrate to other places, they return to nest. The Spanish-killed bird was certainly an exception; it was killed in the November of the same year (1914) in which it was ringed as a nestling.

Fuertes on tropical bird-song.

[Impressions of the voices of tropical Birds. By Louis Agassiz Fuertes. Smithsonian Report for 1915, publ. 1916, pp. 299-323; 16 pls.]

The well-known American bird-artist, Mr. Fuertes, has had many opportunities of listening to the songs of the birds of the Central and South American forests and pasturelands, and in a series of articles, first published in 'Bird-Lore' and now reprinted in the Smithsonian Report, he gives us some of his experiences.

The songs and notes of South American birds are very little known, and Mr. Fuertes adds a good deal to our knowledge and calls up a wonderful picture of their variety and abundance. Often in the forest they are most difficult to locate and identify.

The papers are illustrated by reproductions, black and white, of some of the artistic drawings of tropical birds for which the author is so justly famed.

Howell on the Birds of Californian Islands.

[Birds of the Islands off the coast of southern California. By Alfred Brazier Howell. Pacific Coast Avifauna of the Cooper Ornithological Club, no. 12, pp. 1-127. Hollywood, Cal., 1917. 8vo.]

Along the coast of southern California and at a distance of from twenty to sixty miles from the mainland are a series of small islands, the best known of which are Santa Cruz, Santa Catalina, off which is caught the famous giant Tuna or Tunny, and San Clemente.

Though separated so short a distance from the mainland, a good many of the smaller passerine birds have become sufficiently differentiated to entitle them to subspecific rank, while in a good many other instances subspecific rank has been awarded without justification.

In the present paper Mr. Howell gives a complete and carefully revised list of all the birds which have been known to occur on the island, and discusses at length those forms, nineteen in number, which have been considered worthy of subspecific distinction. As a rule the differentiation is

towards greater size, a larger and heavier bill, and a heavier tarsus and foot. Like most of the work done under the influence of Mr. Grinnell, this appears to have been prepared with a good deal of care and judgment.

Kuroda's recent papers.

[On a collection of Birds from the Micronesian groups of Islands in the Western Pacific. By N. Kuroda. *Tori* [*i. e.* Birds], pt. 2, 1915.

A collection of Birds from Tonkin. By N. Kuroda. *Annot. Zool. Japonenses*, ix. 1917, pp. 217-254.

Notes on Formosan Birds, with the description of a new Bullfinch. *Id. ibid.* pp. 255-297.]

The first of these papers, which is chiefly in Japanese though the names and descriptions are also in English, contains an account of a collection of birds made by Mr. Teraoka from the island groups of the western Pacific, formerly belonging to Germany but now occupied by Japan. These are the Marianne, Pelew, Caroline, and Marshall groups. A number of species are listed and two new forms described—*Halcyon chloris teraokai* from the Pelew Islands, and *Collocalia fucifuga rukensis* from Ruk Island in the Caroline group. Both are figured in colour.

The second paper (wholly in English) deals with a collection made by Mr. S. Tsuchiza on the Red river in French Tonkin. It contains representatives of 130 species. There are no field-notes, but one new species is described, *Gecinus rubripectus*, and some taxonomic notes are given in the case of the more interesting forms.

The collection described in the third paper was to a large extent made by Mr. Kuroda himself during a visit to Formosa in 1916. To the number of species and subspecies given by Mr. Uchida our author has added 30, bringing the total number of forms in the Formosan avifauna to 331. One of these is a new Bullfinch allied to *Pyrhula nipalensis* of the Himalayas, but distinguished by the white areas in some of the tail-feathers; it is named *P. uchidai*. There are interesting field-notes and critical remarks on many of the other species obtained, among which are two pairs of the fine

Mikalo Pheasant taken on Mt. Arisan at an elevation of 8000 feet above sea-level.

Mathews on Australian Birds.

[The Birds of Australia. By Gregory M. Mathews. Vol. vi. pt. 4, pp. 297-373, pls. 300-307. London (Witherby), June 1917. 4to.]

This part is devoted to two genera of purely Australian Parrakeets—in fact we had nearly said to one, for the author only separates the two members of *Barnardius* from *Platycercus* after consideration. Still, he thinks that the former may stand as a “colour genus.”

All species of *Platycercus* vary extraordinarily in plumage according to age, and also according to the district which they inhabit: for instance, *P. flaveolus* has been confounded with one of the forms of *P. elegans*, though typical specimens are so distinct. But Mr. Mathews considers that he can determine with sufficient certainty the following subspecies, apart from the normal form:—of *P. elegans*, *nigrescens*, *melanopterus*, *victoriæ*, *adelaidæ*, and *subadelaidæ*; of *P. flaveolus*, *innominatus*; of *P. caledonicus*, *henrietta*, and a new subspecies *flindersi* from Flinders Island; of *P. icterotis*, *xanthogenys*; of *P. adscitus*, *palliceps*, *amathusiæ*, and *elseyi*; of *P. venustus*, *melvillensis* and *hilli*; finally, of the well-known Rosella, *P. eximius*, *diemenensis* and *cecilæ*, and a new subspecies *colei* from the Ballarat district. Similarly *Barnardius barnardi* is credited with *macgillivrayi* and *whitei*.

Aprosmictus insignissimus of Gould (p. 247), *Platycercus elegans nobbsi* of Tristram (p. 316), *P. mastersianus* of Ramsay (p. 344), *P. ignitus* of Gould and *P. erythropeplus* of Salvadori (p. 362) are rejected as hybrids or sports, while *P. paradiseus* (p. 316) is attributed to a slip of the pen.

Where colour points to an ancestral form, the possible ancestor is brought into consideration, and the evolution of the later forms discussed.

The ranges of the various species, as above delimited, are

comparatively restricted, while it is noted that they all appear to agree in procuring most of their food in the form of seeds, sought on the ground, and fruits.

The author considers that the claims of Brown as a zoologist have been distinctly neglected, owing no doubt to his eminence as a botanist: his work is shown to have been very careful, and his statements are by no means to be disregarded.

Matthew and Granger on Diatryma.

[The skeleton of *Diatryma*, a gigantic Bird from the Lower Eocene of Wyoming. By W. D. Matthew and Walter Granger. Bull. Amer. Mus. N. H. New York, xxxvii. 1917, pp. 307-326; 14 pls., 1 text-fig.]

Owing to the scarcity of their remains, our knowledge of fossil birds is extremely limited as compared with that of mammals and reptiles. The remains of these are so abundant that we now possess a sufficient knowledge to enable us to trace the ancestral trees of many of the living forms. This is far from being the case with birds. Of these we have first the Jurassic *Archæopteryx*, then *Hesperornis* and *Ichthyornis* of the Cretaceous, and lastly *Phororhachos* of the South American Tertiaries. To these must now be added *Diatryma*, of which a nearly complete skeleton has recently been discovered by Mr. Stein, one of the most experienced of the American Museum's collectors, in the lower Eocene beds of the Bighorn basin of Wyoming.

Diatryma was a gigantic ground-living bird with vestigial wings. The height of the reconstructed skeleton is nearly seven feet. The head and neck are quite unlike that of any living bird, the neck being short and massive and the head enormous, with a huge compressed beak nine inches long by six inches high. The sternum is not preserved, but from the fact that the coracoids appear to have met in the median line, Messrs. Matthew and Granger infer that it was narrow anteriorly and resembled that of *Cariama* rather than that of the Ratites, though it probably had no keel. The shoulder-girdle resembles that of the Emu-Cassowary group, but this

is most probably the result of convergence or parallelism, not of affinity, and must be ascribed to the loss of flight-power.

The only living bird with which *Diatryma* seems to show any real relationship is *Cariama*, the Seriamma or Screamer of South America, an isolated and primitive type whose affinities have been much disputed but are now considered to be with the Cranes (Gruiformes).

So distinct, however, is this remarkable form that Messrs. Matthew and Granger have found it necessary to place it in a new order and family Diatrymæ, which should be placed provisionally near the Cranes. The genus was first described by Cope in 1874 from some fragments, chiefly of the leg-bones. The skeleton here described is referred to a new species, *D. steini*, differing only from the type-form in the greater length of the outer digit.

The memoir is fully illustrated and contains full descriptions of all the bones as well as some very interesting general conclusions on avian palæontology, which should be studied by all interested in this subject.

Mullens and Swann's Bibliography of British Ornithology.

[A Bibliography of British Ornithology from the earliest times to the end of 1912, including biographical accounts of the principal writers and bibliographies of their published works. By W. H. Mullens, M.A., etc., etc., and H. Kirke Swann. xx+691 pp. London (Macmillan), 1916-1917. 8vo. 36s.]

Messrs. Mullens and Swann's valuable work is now completed, and we have nothing but praise to give to it. It is a monument of learning and research, and anyone who has had to do with preparing biographies and bibliographies will realize what infinite time and patience are required to obtain a tithe of the facts required, many of which have to be sought out through correspondence and by reference to obscure works.

Some fifteen pages of addenda and corrigenda are printed in the last part recently issued and help to render the list of works and biographies more complete, but it is quite

evident that there are still numbers of items which must have escaped the keen eyes of the authors.

We are still of opinion that a good many works have been included which hardly deserve a place, and also that it would have been wiser to have confined the biographies to non-living authors, but we do not wish to quarrel with the writers for giving us more than we bargained for.

Of all the works on British ornithology undoubtedly the most popular is Gilbert White's 'Selborne.' Mr. Mullens has long been known as an authority on this subject, and we find under the heading of Gilbert White a very full account of his life and thirteen pages of bibliography. Only one edition of 'The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne' was published in White's lifetime, but since his death in 1793 some forty-two entirely distinct editions, apart from reissues and reprints, have appeared testifying to the popularity of the work.

Many of the other older writers on British Birds such as Ray, Pennant, Tunstall, and Merrett, about whom little or nothing is generally known though their names are familiar, are treated at length and render this work not only a most useful book of reference, but also one which can be read with great pleasure and interest for its own sake.

Peters on a new Porto Rican Bird.

[The Porto Rican Grasshopper Sparrow. By James L. Peters. Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, vol. 30, 1917, pp. 95-96.]

Mr. Peters finds that the Grasshopper Sparrow occurring in Porto Rico is most closely allied to that of Jamaica (*Ammodramus savannarum savannarum*) rather than to that of Santo Domingo (*A. s. intricatus*), but that it is distinct from both. He here proposes to name it *A. s. borinquensis*.

Poliakov on Siberian Birds.

[Birds collected by A. P. Velizhanin in the basin of the upper Irtysh. By G. I. Poliakov. Reprinted from the Messenger Ornith. pp. 1-136 (in Russian). Moscow, 1915.]

M. Poliakov sends us a reprint of his paper on the birds

of the upper Irtysh, that great tributary of the Obi river which rises in the Altai mountains in the heart of Asia. The collection made by Mr. Velizhanin numbers 251 species, but no new forms are described in the present paper. As the work except the title, is in Russian it is difficult to say much more about it.

Swarth on Williamson's Sapsucker.

[Geographical variation in *Sphyrapicus thyroideus*. By H. S. Swarth. Condor, xix. 1917, pp. 62-65.]

Mr. Swarth considers that the well-known Williamson's Sapsucker of western North America may be divided into two local races, distinguished by the length of the bill. The typical form *S. t. thyroideus*, with a culmen over 25 mm., inhabits California and British Columbia; the newly distinguished race will bear the old name, *S. t. nataliæ*, founded on a small-billed example from Mexico by Malherbe (J. f. O. 1854, p. 171), and extends north to Colorado. In fact it is only a winter visitor to Mexico.

Swenk on the Eskimo Curlew.

[The Eskimo Curlew and its disappearance. By Myron H. Swenk. Smithsonian Report for 1915, 1916, pp. 325-340; 1 pl.]

It appears to be likely that the Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*) will shortly share the fate of the Passenger Pigeon and the Great Auk and disappear entirely from our living avifauna. First described by Forster from Hudson's Bay in 1772, the Eskimo Curlew breeds in the Barren Grounds of Mackenzie in the arctic regions of North America, and has a very remarkable migration route to and fro from Argentina—its winter home.

In the spring migration these birds pass north through the Mississippi valley, rarely if ever occurring on the Atlantic coasts. After the breeding-season is finished, late in July or early in August, they move south-eastwards to Labrador, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia, whence they pass across 2000 miles of ocean, direct to the Lesser Antilles and thence

down the Brazilian coasts to their winter home. It is only occasionally after a heavy easterly gale that some birds reach the New England coasts, while a few have rarely been driven by westerly gales as far as the coasts of the British Islands.

During the past few years, however, the Eskimo Curlew, formerly arriving in immense flocks in the middle prairie States in the spring, has become rarer and rarer. The last record for Kansas is 1902 and for Wisconsin 1899, while in Nebraska, of which Mr. Swenk writes at greater length, a flock of six or seven were seen in 1913 and a single bird was killed on 17 April, 1915. The bird is probably not yet extinct, but is on the high road to extinction, and will doubtless become so in a few years' time.

Wetmore on a sexual character of the Ruddy Duck.

[On certain secondary sexual characters in the male Ruddy Duck, *Erismatura jamaicensis* (Gmelin). By Alexander Wetmore. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. Washington, vol. 52, 1917, pp. 479-482.]

The Ruddy Duck is peculiar, as was first shown by MaeGillivray, in the absence of the bulla ossea or bony box generally found at the junction of the two bronchi. Mr. Wetmore has now discovered an additional peculiarity, confined, however, in this species to the male sex only. This is the presence of a tracheal air-sac quite unconnected with the regular system of pulmonary air-sacs. The tracheal sac opens into the trachea on the dorsal side immediately behind the larynx. The modifications of the larynx and of the neck muscles which control the inflation of the air-sac are described by Mr. Wetmore, though we think his remarks would have been more easily followed if they had been illustrated by additional and clearer figures.

The air-sac is inflated by the male during courtship-display, and has only been proved to exist in *Erismatura jamaicensis*, but from the description given by other authors of the display of other species of the genus, it is probably present in these as well as in the species of the allied genera *Thalassornis* and *Nomonyx*.

Wetmore on the Birds of Culebra Island.

[The Birds of Culebra Island, Porto Rico. By Alexander Wetmore. Auk, xxxiv. 1917, pp. 51-62.]

The little island of Culebra, which is only seven miles by five, is about twenty miles east of Cape San Juan, the north-eastern point of Porto Rico. While collecting in the last-named island in 1912 Mr. Wetmore spent about a month in Culebra, and in this paper he gives a list of birds collected and observed, numbering 53 species, nearly all of which are also found in the larger island. Culebra, though subject at times to torrential rains, is dry and arid, and there is no permanent fresh-water supply beyond that derived by storing the rainfall. In consequence the avifauna is much poorer than that of Porto Rico and shows a slight decrease in the number of forms as compared with the neighbouring island of Vieques, the fauna of which had previously been investigated by Mr. Wetmore.

Wetmore on the New Zealand Cuckoo.

[A new Cuckoo from New Zealand. By Alexander Wetmore. Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, vol. 30, 1917, pp. 1-2.]

In a short note Mr. Wetmore proposes to distinguish the form of *Urodynamis taitensis* (Sparrman) inhabiting New Zealand under the name *U. t. pheletes* subsp. n., owing to its more buffy and heavily-streaked underparts. The type-locality of *U. t. taitensis* is Tahiti.

List of other Ornithological Publications received.

GLADSTONE, HUGH S. Handbook to Lord Lilford's Coloured Figures of the Birds of the British Isles. (London, 1917.)

GYLDENSTOLPE, NILS. On Birds and Mammals from the Malay Peninsula. (Archiv für Zoologi, Band 10, No. 26. Stockholm, 1917.)

GYLDENSTOLPE, NILS. Notes on the Heel-pads in certain families of Birds. (Archiv für Zoologi, Band 11, No. 12. Stockholm, 1917.)

- MATHEWS, G. M. *The Birds of Australia.* (Vol. vi. pt. 5. London, 1917.)
- WHITE, S. A. *The Cruise of the 'Avocet.'* (Adelaide, 1917.)
- The Auk.* (Vol. xxxiv. No. 3. Cambridge, Mass., 1917.)
- Austral Avian Record.* (Vol. iii. No. 4. London, 1917.)
- Avicultural Magazine.* (Third Series, Vol. viii. Nos. 9-11. London, 1917.)
- Belfast Naturalists' Field Club. *Annual Report and Proceedings.* (Series II. Vol. vii. pt. iv. Belfast, 1917.)
- Bird-Lore.* (Vol. xix. Nos. 3, 4. New York, 1917.)
- Bird Notes.* (New Series, Vol. viii. Nos. 6-8. Ashbourne, 1917.)
- British Birds.* (Vol. xi. Nos. 2-4. London, 1917.)
- The Condor.* (Vol. xix. Nos. 3, 4. Hollywood, Cal., 1917.)
- The Emu.* (Vol. xvi. pts. 2, 4; Vol. xvii. pt. 1. Melbourne, 1917.)
- The Irish Naturalist.* (Vol. xxvi. Nos. 7-9. Dublin, 1917.)
- Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society.* (Vol. xxiv. No. 5; xxv. No. 1. Bombay, 1917.)
- Journal of the Natural History Society of Siam.* (Vol. ii. No. 3. Bangkok, 1917.)
- Message Ornithologique.* (1917, No. 2. Moscow, 1917.)
- Revue Française d'Ornithologie.* (Nos. 98-101. Orléans, 1917.)
- South Australian Ornithologist.* (Vol. iii. pt. 3. Adelaide, 1917.)

XXXIV.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

Breeding-habits of the Cuckoo.

SIR,—Major Meiklejohn's paper on the breeding-habits of the Cuckoo has been prepared under such disadvantages, that it seems an ungracious task to criticise it, but as you have already published several communications on the subject, may I be permitted to offer a few remarks?

In the first place, although Dr. Rey's work is exhaustively analysed, the important papers by V. Čapek (*Ornith. Jahrbuch*, 1896, pp. 41, 102, 146, and 165) are apparently unknown to the writer, and this fact alone renders Major Meiklejohn's *résumé* of the whole subject imperfect. He has also overlooked the articles on the Cuckoo by Mr. F. B. Kirkman and myself which appeared in the '*British Bird Book.*' This I venture to think renders his list of fosterers (p. 222) unrepresentative of the present state